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“A wise man will hear, and will increase learning.” - Proverbs 1:5

## **A Game of Smoke and Mirrors**

A Further Refutation of Chris Pinto

I previously wrote an article refuting the conclusions of Chris Pinto which were presented in his film, The Hidden Faith of our Founding Fathers. Mr. Pinto has responded to that article with a series of three radio broadcasts, and I have been asked by several of his followers to present an answer to those broadcasts. I will present that answer here, and I trust that those reading it will recognize the pit that Mr. Pinto has dug for himself and avoid it.

Let me begin by addressing a segment from early in the first broadcast in which Mr. Pinto stated:

“I’m not talking about those of you who are sincere believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. I’m talking about the pseudo-historians like David Barton, John Eidsmoe, Dr. Catherine Millard and now Bill Fortenberry who supports the work of all three of those people that I just mentioned. “

There are two points of interest in this statement that I would like to draw to your attention. First, I find it interesting that Mr. Pinto has labeled me as a pseudo-historian when he admits later in his response that he knows nothing of my qualifications. He has no idea whether I am a historian at all much less a pseudo-historian. The only possible reason that I can see for him to make such a claim is that I have dared to disagree with him on his view of the Treaty of Tripoli. In addition to this perplexing appellation, Mr. Pinto makes a very bold contrast between those who are sincere believers in Christ and those whom he labels as pseudo-historians. What does Mr. Pinto mean by making such a contrast? Does he really intend to imply that I have to agree with his view of history in order to be a sincere believer in Christ? That sure seems to be the gist of his statement, and if that is really what Mr. Pinto intended to say, then he has embraced a heresy far greater than any that he has attributed to the founding fathers, for he would have thus proclaimed himself to be that standard of Truth by which all men are to be judged.

After this ad-hominem attack, Mr. Pinto chose to deride me for limiting my article to a refutation of a single portion of his film. For some reason, he seems to doubt that anyone would be able to fill a book with arguments for a view contrary to his own. How he could have such doubts in light of the vast number of such books that have already been written is beyond me. Perhaps Mr. Pinto imagines that he has presented new arguments for which there can be no rebuttal. Be that as it may, the fact that I have chosen to limit my refutation to a single portion of Mr. Pinto’s video does not in any way make that refutation any less credible. I would be more than willing to demonstrate my ability to write a book or even a multi-volume set refuting all of Mr. Pinto’s claims if he would only be so kind as to pay me for the time and effort thus invested. Until then, however, he will have to be satisfied with whatever meager refutation I may choose to make.

Mr. Pinto then proceeded to exclaim that my footnotes do not make any sense. In his words:

“His attack against me and the film is so badly researched that his footnotes don’t make any sense ... He’s not even directing you to information that makes any sense ... He makes a statement and he puts a

footnote there and the average reader thinks that he must have support for this statement, but he doesn't."

There is actually a small measure of truth to this statement. I originally wrote the previous article as a letter to the friend who had asked me about Mr. Pinto's film, and as such, it did not include footnotes. Upon completion of the letter and just prior to leaving on a missions trip to Panama, I decided to publish the article for the benefit of others, and I hastily added the references to it. Apparently, I was a bit too hasty, for I found that there are two small errors in the footnotes. First, footnote number one was inadvertently created as a link to Mr. Miller's notes on the Treaty of Algiers rather than to his notes on the Treaty of Tripoli. The two references only differ from each other in a single number, and I did not notice the error in my proofreading. Additionally, footnote number three should have been placed at the end of the second sentence in the eighth paragraph of my article rather than at the end of the last sentence in that paragraph. Both of these errors have been corrected in the original article, and I am grateful to Mr. Pinto for bringing them to my attention.

At this point in the broadcast, Mr. Pinto decided to object to the form of argumentation which I employed in my article. In particular, he accused me of giving my analysis of what he said in his film and stated that this is a form of sophistry and casuistry and a straw man tactic. In reality, I merely spelled out the series of premises that Mr. Pinto presented in his film and from which he purported to draw his conclusion that the Treaty of Tripoli represents "the clearest declaration that the original founders of the United States of America did not believe that they were setting forth a Christian nation." It is interesting to note that Mr. Pinto did not present a single, specific objection to any of the premises that I listed. Such an objection would have been necessary in order for him to prove the charge of sophistry or casuistry or the use of a straw man. He objected only to the fact that I created a list and not to the contents of the list itself. This seems to me to be a rather petty objection. If Mr. Pinto prefers that those who disagree with him include a verbatim representation of his position in their articles, then he should make transcripts of his films and broadcasts freely available on his website.

In regards to my first point that Article 11 was actually a letter written from the Dey of Algiers to the Pasha of Tripoli, Mr. Pinto repeated his insistence that it was the English translation of the treaty which was ratified by the Senate and which should be the focus of the discussion. This is incorrect. While it is true that an English translation was made of the treaty and that the English translation was provided to the Senate, it is wholly fallacious to claim that the translation was somehow made superior to the original treaty. Imagine for a moment that the translation of this treaty had disagreed with the original in regards to the amount to be paid by the United States to the nation of Tripoli. The Arabic original included a demand for twelve thousand Spanish dollars. If the English translation had erroneously recorded this amount as twelve hundred Spanish dollars, which of the two versions would be considered superior to the other? The answer, of course, is that the Arabic original is superior to the English translation. Any errors which may exist in the English translation are of no real consequence. It is the original treaty and only the original treaty which was made the law of the land by virtue of being ratified by the Senate.

Of course, one may ask what value should be placed in the English translation, and we could answer that it should not receive any value at all other than that of a curiosity of early American history. I am sure that Mr. Pinto would argue for a much higher value, but in order to give the translation any greater credence, he must first be able to demonstrate that the Senators of that time were ignorant of the fact that the translation contained errors. However, contrary to the impression that is given by Mr. Pinto's comments, the Senate did not simply read the treaty out loud in English and then vote to ratify it. The

Senate Executive Journal records that the treaty was delivered to the Senate by John Adams on May 26, 1797,<sup>1</sup> that it was read before the Senate on May the 29<sup>th</sup>,<sup>2</sup> that it was referred to a committee for consideration on May the 30<sup>th</sup><sup>3</sup> and that they did not give their consent to its ratification until June the 7<sup>th</sup>.<sup>4</sup> The Senators had ample time and opportunity to familiarize themselves with actual Arabic treaty on which they were voting. They did not simply read the English translation and give their approval of it.

Furthermore, it was known at that time that the English translation was “extremely erroneous.” About a month after the Senate gave their consent to the ratification of the treaty, they also gave their consent to the President’s appointment of James Cathcart as Consul General of Tripoli. When Mr. Cathcart arrived in Tripoli, he obtained not just a copy of the English translation of the treaty, but he also procured an Italian translation which contained this explanation of its contents: “Literal translation of the Treaty between the United States of America & the Regency of Tripoli in Barbary-the translation in English sign’d by Joel Barlow EsqT on the 26th of November 1796 being extremely erroneous.”<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that this description of the errors in the English translation does not apply just to the contents of Article 11, but rather the entire translation was very poorly constructed. As Mr. Miller noted in his commentary on the treaty, “the Barlow translation is at best a poor attempt at a paraphrase or summary of the sense of the Arabic; and even as such its defects throughout are obvious and glaring.”<sup>6</sup> In order for Mr. Pinto’s position on the treaty to be considered as true, he must be able to demonstrate that the Senators who ratified that document were too ignorant to notice the translation errors which have been pointed out by multiple individuals throughout the history of the treaty.

Consider for a moment that one of the men on the Senate committee assigned to review the Treaty of Tripoli was Henry Tazewell. Very few people alive today have ever heard of Mr. Tazewell, but he was very well known during the latter part of the 18th century when the Treaty of Tripoli was signed. Prior to being elected to the Senate in 1794, Mr. Tazewell had graduated from the College of William and Mary with a degree in law, been elected to serve as a member of the house of burgesses, was a delegate to the Virginia constitutional convention, was a member of the Virginia General Assembly, served as first a judge and then as chief justice of the Virginia General Court and also as a judge on the Virginia Supreme Court. And he had accomplished all of this by the time that he was forty one years of age.<sup>7</sup> This was one of the men who were asked to review the Treaty of Tripoli before it was voted on by the Senate. Surely, Mr. Pinto is not suggesting that Mr. Tazewell was so incompetent that he was unable to recognize the errors in the English translation of the treaty. That leaves us with only two options. Either Mr. Tazewell consented to the insertion of the text of Article 11 into the English translation in spite of his knowledge as a judge that the translation itself was non-binding, or he recognized the flaws of the English translation and decided that the errors contained in a non-binding translation of the treaty were

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<sup>1</sup> Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States of America, Volume 1, pg 240-241  
([http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llej&fileName=001/llej001.db&recNum=247&itemLink=D?hlaw:3:/temp/~ammem\\_1P1k::%230010248](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llej&fileName=001/llej001.db&recNum=247&itemLink=D?hlaw:3:/temp/~ammem_1P1k::%230010248))

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States of America, Volume 1, pg 244  
([http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llej&fileName=001/llej001.db&recNum=250&itemLink=D?hlaw:3:/temp/~ammem\\_1P1k::%230010248](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llej&fileName=001/llej001.db&recNum=250&itemLink=D?hlaw:3:/temp/~ammem_1P1k::%230010248))

<sup>5</sup> [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/bar1796n.asp#n3](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/bar1796n.asp#n3)

<sup>6</sup> [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/bar1796n.asp#n6](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/bar1796n.asp#n6)

<sup>7</sup> <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=T000107>

not sufficient cause for rejecting the treaty itself. It seems only reasonable to me to conclude that the second option is more likely to be the path taken by a man of such intelligence and experience as Mr. Tazewell.

Let me move on to the second point which I made in my previous article. In that point, I stated that “the treaty was fully written, signed, translated and bound into a book before it ever crossed the Atlantic to be ratified by the Senate.” This single fact is the key to understanding the relationship between the Treaty of Tripoli and the Christian heritage of our nation, for it is this fact which deals a death blow to the claims of men like Mr. Pinto who argue that Article 11 was written by the founding fathers. Intriguingly, however, Mr. Pinto did not address this fact at all in his broadcasts. He simply read my statement out loud, accused me of ignoring the English translation and skipped to point number three.

Why did Mr. Pinto gloss over this point? Could it be that he recognized and sought to avoid the danger that my claim poses to his position? Had he deigned to address my claim, he would have had to explain how his proposed sequence of events could be rectified with the fact that the treaty was translated into English on November 26, 1796,<sup>8</sup> a mere twenty-two days after it was signed by the Pasha of Tripoli, that Mr. Barlow had both the treaty and the translation with him in Algiers where arrangements were made for the payment of the tribute demanded therein,<sup>9</sup> that the Arabic treaty and the English translation along with the original note and receipt of the tribute and their English translations were collectively sent by Mr. Barlow to Col. David Humphreys in Lisbon on January 4th, 1797,<sup>10</sup> that Col. Humphreys added a letter of approval to the collection on February 10, 1797 after which the whole collection was bound into a book<sup>11</sup> and that it was that book containing both the Arabic treaty and the English translation which was brought to America to be ratified by the Senate as evidenced by the fact that a printed copy of the treaty was not available at the time that it was submitted to the Senate.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the proclamation of the treaty which Mr. Adams caused to be published throughout the nation prefaced the English text with a clear statement that the official treaty was written in Arabic and that the English text was just a translation of it.<sup>13</sup> As we will see, none of these facts are consistent with Mr. Pinto’s portrayal of the events surrounding this treaty.

Let me mention as a side note that while it is technically true that the Senate voted unanimously to give their consent to the ratification of the treaty, it should be noted that only twenty-three of the thirty-two Senators were present at the time that the vote was taken.<sup>14</sup> Nearly a third of the Senate was absent for one reason or another, so it is incorrect for Mr. Pinto to state that the Treaty of Tripoli was unanimously

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<sup>8</sup> [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/bar1796n.asp#n3](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/bar1796n.asp#n3)

<sup>9</sup> [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/bar1796t.asp#t1](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/bar1796t.asp#t1)

<sup>10</sup> [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/bar1796n.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/bar1796n.asp)

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

<sup>12</sup> Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States of America, Volume 1, pg 241

([http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llej&fileName=001/llej001.db&recNum=247&itemLink=D?hlaw:3:/temp/~ammem\\_1P1k::%230010248](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llej&fileName=001/llej001.db&recNum=247&itemLink=D?hlaw:3:/temp/~ammem_1P1k::%230010248))

<sup>13</sup> Cobbett, William, *Porcupine’s Works*, Volume 6, London, 1801, pg 60

([http://books.google.com/books?id=n\\_gQAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA60#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=n_gQAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA60#v=onepage&q&f=false))

<sup>14</sup> Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States of America, Volume 1, pg 244

([http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llej&fileName=001/llej001.db&recNum=250&itemLink=D?hlaw:3:/temp/~ammem\\_1P1k::%230010248](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llej&fileName=001/llej001.db&recNum=250&itemLink=D?hlaw:3:/temp/~ammem_1P1k::%230010248))

ratified by all the members of the Senate. It can be said, and I have even said myself, that the vote was unanimous, but to add that it was voted on by all the Senators is false.

Now, let's consider Mr. Pinto's response to my third point. Here, he makes the admission that he has never heard anyone else make the argument that I have made, and he's right. As far as I know, no one else has ever presented the position that I have taken on this treaty. Mr. Pinto would like to think of me as a disciple of David Barton. In fact, he referred to my article as being from "patriot preacher and Bartonian disciple, Bill Fortenberry," but my position on the Treaty of Tripoli stands in near complete opposition to the stand that Mr. Barton has taken. In his article on the topic, he makes no mention whatsoever of the Arabic original from which the English version was translated. He attempted to take the English translation at face value and explain how America could still be a Christian nation in spite of the statement in Article 11.<sup>15</sup> Mr. Pinto suggests that I stop reading the works of others and focus on original source information, and I am pleased to inform him that I have been focusing on original source information the entire time. My position is founded on neither the errors of David Barton nor the rantings of Moncure D. Conway, but rather on the actual facts of the treaty itself.

At this point, Mr. Pinto also suggested that the Senate could have struck out Article 11 and that they could have ratified the entire treaty except for that one article. There is only one, small problem with this suggestion. The Senate does not have the Constitutional authority to modify treaties. According to Section 2 of Article II of the Constitution, it is the President who has "Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties."<sup>16</sup> The Senate's role is that of advice and consent only. They have no negotiating authority. Therefore, when Mr. Adams presented the Treaty of Tripoli to the Senate for their consent, their only option was to either offer that consent or deny it. As we have already seen, the Senate had in their possession the original, handwritten version of the treaty along with the English translation by Mr. Barlow, and the discrepancies between the original treaty and Mr. Barlow's translation were both glaring and obvious. Why would the Senate refuse its consent to a much sought after and dearly purchased treaty based solely on the grounds that the non-binding, English translation of that treaty contained obvious flaws? These men correctly recognized that they were giving their consent only to the ratification of the original Arabic treaty, that Article 11 of the original treaty was a non-binding letter from the Dey of Algiers to the Pasha of Tripoli and that they had no grounds for refusing their consent to its ratification.

Nonetheless, Mr. Pinto's suggestion actually does have some degree of merit. The Senate could have requested that the first sentence of Article 11 be removed from the English translation of the treaty. Why could they have made such a request? Precisely because the English translation is not the actual treaty that they were asked to vote on. The translation had no constitutional protection beyond the protection guaranteed to it by the copyright clause of Article I, Section 8. The Senate could very easily have asked that a new and better translation be made available to them, but for what purpose? The very fact which would have allowed them to ask for a new translation is the same fact which proves that the translation itself is inconsequential. Why then should they waste resources on a second translation? Instead of bickering over the errors present in the English, they simply advised the President that they had given their consent to the treaty which everyone knew was written in Arabic. In either case, however, it is clear from the Constitution that the Senate could not have done as Mr. Pinto proposed by ratifying all of the treaty except for Article 11. To do so would have been an exercise of negotiating powers which are reserved solely to the executive branch of the government.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.wallbuilders.com/libissuesarticles.asp?id=125>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html)

Let me again address Mr. Pinto's claim about the footnote in this section of my previous article. As I stated previously, footnote number three should have been placed after the second sentence of this paragraph instead of at the end. Mr. Pinto stated in his broadcast that he clicked on the footnote and that it did not make any sense because it was merely a link to the text of the actual treaty. The opening line of text on that page reads as follows:

"Treaty of Peace and Friendship, signed at Tripoli November 4, 1796 (3 Ramada I, A. H. 1211), and at Algiers January 3, 1797 (4 Rajab, A. H. 1211). Original in Arabic. Submitted to the Senate May 29, 1797. (Message of May 26, 1797.) Resolution of advice and consent June 7, 1797."

Thus, the footnote at the end of this paragraph is not nonsensical as Mr. Pinto claims. Rather, it provides evidence to support the primary point of the paragraph that negotiations on the treaty had already been concluded by the time that it was submitted to the Senate. They did not have the option of debating the contents of the treaty. They could only choose between accepting it as a whole or rejecting it altogether and continuing the war against Tripoli.

We now come to Mr. Pinto's response to points four and five of my previous article, and I was surprised to hear that I had provided a quote from Dr. Wilson which was published in the December 3, 1831, edition of the Evangelical Magazine. As far as I know, I have never read the December 3, 1831, issue of that magazine much less quoted from it. In fact, I did not provide any quotation at all from the Evangelical Magazine. What I did provide was two footnotes. The first of those footnotes was a link to page number 411 of the yearly volume which is the third page of the December 24, 1831, issue. Here is a quote from that page:

"A general consternation pervades the ranks of our Presbyterian brethren since the publication of Dr. Wilson's infamous sermon. Some call it a forgery -- manufactured in this village, and for this paper -- by calling on us, or examining a file of the Albany Daily Advertiser, these may learn their mistake. Others deny the Doctor to be a Presbyterian. Whether he is, or not, we have not stated positively -- we believe he is, and advise them, before they deny it, to inquire for themselves. Certain it is, Doctor Ely of Philadelphia, and Doctor Henry R. Wilson of Albany, contend who is the most orthodox in the Presbyterian faith, and agree in politics. (See Magazine and Advocate, No. 49, Vol. 2) Let, then, every honest and republican Presbyterian inquire for himself and act accordingly. There are, certainly, many patriotic men in that denomination and we solemnly call on them, as they love our country, its liberties and free institutions, to come out of this Babel of iniquity -- have no part nor lot in the treason of their leaders and openly oppose their iniquitous designs and unhallowed sentiments. If they do not inquire -- if they will not act against them -- then let them come out boldly in defence of the sermons of Doctors Wilson and Ely -- let them be men even in their treason."

As you can see, the editors of the Evangelical Magazine stated just two months after Dr. Wilson gave his sermon that it was presented by Dr. Henry R. Wilson. The name of Dr. Bird Wilson was not associated with this sermon until Franklin Steiner's book which was published more than 100 years later in 1936.<sup>17</sup> Mr. Pinto admitted in his response that he relied partly on Mr. Steiner's book for his claim that the sermon was presented by Dr. Bird Wilson, but he failed to mention that this book was published more than a century after the fact.

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<sup>17</sup> Steiner, Franklin, *The Religious Beliefs of our Presidents: From Washington to F.D.R.*, Prometheus Books, Amherst, New York, 1995, pg. 26 ([http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/franklin\\_steiner/presidents.html](http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/franklin_steiner/presidents.html))



Mr. Steiner's book borrowed extensively from the work of John E. Remsburg of whom Mr. Steiner wrote, "John E. Remsburg, in his *Six Historic Americans*, has given the religious views of four Presidents, Washington, Grant, Lincoln and Jefferson, which is the only attempt I know of to do justice to the subject."<sup>18</sup> Mr. Remsburg, however, made a clear differentiation between the Rev. Dr. Wilson who preached the sermon published in the Albany Daily Advertiser and the Rev. Bird Wilson D.D. who wrote the *Memoir of Bishop White*.<sup>19</sup> This distinction is overlooked by Mr. Steiner, and thus Mr. Pinto was led to believe that the two Dr. Wilsons were one and the same.

Moreover, the editors of the Evangelical Magazine clearly stated that the Dr. Wilson who preached the infamous sermon in Albany was believed to be a Presbyterian minister. Dr. Bird Wilson, however, was an Episcopalian. Thus we have a contemporary source which fully refutes Mr. Pinto's claim that this sermon was preached by Dr. Bird Wilson.

Mr. Pinto's admission that he has relied on the work of Mr. Steiner actually explains a great deal about his view of the founding fathers. In the introduction to his book *The Religious Beliefs of our Presidents*, Mr. Steiner wrote: "Two broad principles have guided me in seeking information about the religious opinions of public men. First, when such a man has in fact been religious, he has almost always made it known ... My second rule leads me to conclude that where a noted man has in fact been of a certain belief or a member of a certain Church, the fact has never been disputed."<sup>20</sup> Mr. Pinto seems to have applied these rules and especially the second one to his own investigations. The flaw in these two rules is aptly illustrated by a letter that Patrick Henry wrote to his daughter in 1796:

"Amongst other strange things said of me, I hear it is said by the deists that I am one of their number; and, indeed, that some good people think I am no Christian. This thought gives me much more pain than the appellation of Tory; because I think religion of infinitely higher importance than politics; and I find much cause to reproach myself that I have lived so long and have given no decided and public proofs of my being a Christian. But, indeed, my dear child, this is a character which I prize far above all this world has, or can boast."<sup>21</sup>

Here we have a statement from one of the founding fathers of our nation that men like Mr. Steiner and Mr. Pinto would look on his life and wrongly conclude that he was not a Christian which brings us to the question of Mr. Pinto's definition of a Christian. At the beginning of this segment of his program, Mr. Pinto correctly identified Christianity as a belief in the Gospel as presented in the Bible – that Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried and that He rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures.<sup>22</sup> There is nothing in the Gospel itself which requires a man to hold to any additional belief. The only requirement for salvation is a belief in and an acceptance of the sacrificial death of Jesus. If any man shall confess with his mouth the Lord Jesus and shall believe in his heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, that man shall be saved.<sup>23</sup> We can state with assurance that any of

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid* pg. 9

<sup>19</sup> Remsburg, John E., *Six Historic Americans*, The Truth Seeker Company, New York, 1906, pg. 107-108 (<http://archive.org/stream/sixhistoricame1943rems#page/n115/mode/2up>)

<sup>20</sup> Steiner, pg. 9

<sup>21</sup> Henry, William Wirt, *Patrick Henry; Life, Correspondence and Speeches, Volume 2*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1891, pg 570 (<http://books.google.com/books?id=yx5CAAAIAAJ&pg=PA570#v=onepage&q&f=false>)

<sup>22</sup> I Corinthians 15:4

<sup>23</sup> Romans 10:9

the founding fathers who accepted the sacrificial death of Jesus for the forgiveness of his sins was a Christian regardless of any accusations to the contrary.

In spite of Mr. Pinto's correct definition of Christianity, he does not seem to apply that definition to his study of the founding fathers. Rather, he seems to have a list of doctrines beyond the gospel by which he judges these men to be anti-Christ. For example, Mr. Pinto took exception to my inclusion of Charles Carroll in my list of founding fathers who were Christians, but he did not object on grounds of Mr. Carroll's belief in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, Mr. Pinto objected to calling Charles Carroll a Christian solely because Mr. Carroll was a member of the Catholic church. Perhaps Mr. Pinto can provide us with a verse stating that no Catholic can ever enter into heaven. I certainly cannot find such a doctrine within the pages of Scripture. I agree that there is a great deal of error within the Catholic teachings and that those who rely on such false doctrines for their salvation will find themselves facing the wrath of God, but to claim that no one can be both Christian and Catholic is contrary to the clear teachings of the Bible. All one has to do to obtain salvation is accept the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. Mr. Carroll proclaimed his acceptance of that sacrifice in a letter to Dr. Charles Wharton on September 27, 1825 in which he stated: "On the mercy of my redeemer I rely for salvation and on his merits; not on the works I have done in obedience to his precepts."<sup>24</sup>

Of course, it is obvious that Mr. Pinto is not alone in his opinion that those who do not hold to a particular set of doctrines must be denounced as anti-Christ. I have often come across people, for example, who say that one must believe in the young age of the earth in order to be a "real" Christian, yet Dr. William Lane Craig who rejects that doctrine has a solid profession of faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ and is as assuredly a Christian as any young earth creationist could ever hope to be. Likewise, Dr. Wilson, in his sermon on the religion of the presidents, stated emphatically that George Washington was not a Christian solely because Mr. Washington did not partake of the Lord's Supper, and he condemned John Adams solely because Mr. Adams partook of the Lord's Supper in a Unitarian Church. Dr. Wilson makes no attempt whatsoever to discover if either of these men had accepted the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. He sought only to discover some area of practice in which they differed from his own beliefs and condemned them as infidels based upon that practice alone.

Wholly absent from Dr. Wilson's sermon (and Mr. Pinto's film as well) is any consideration of the following prayer which has been preserved in Mr. Washington's own handwriting:

"O God, who art rich in mercy and plenteous in redemption, mark not, I beseech thee, what I have done amiss; remember that I am but dust, and remit my transgressions, negligences & ignorances, and cover them all with the absolute obedience of thy dear Son, that those sacrifices which I have offered may be accepted by thee, in and for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ offered upon the cross for me; for his sake, ease

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<sup>24</sup> Mr. Pinto will likely object to the fact that I am once again referencing David Barton's website, but as far as I can tell, Mr. Carroll's letter has never been published by anyone else. If Mr. Pinto is able to locate another publication which contains the full text of Mr. Carroll's letter and which does not reference Mr. Barton's private collection as the source of that text, then I would be happy to change this footnote for his benefit. In the mean time, however, let me direct you to the following page on Mr. Barton's website:

<http://www.wallbuilders.com/libissuesarticles.asp?id=49>



me of the burden of my sins and give me grace that by the call of the Gospel I may rise from the slumber of sin into the newness of life."<sup>25</sup>

Mr. Washington wrote this prayer when he was about twenty years of age, and if it was the true confession of his heart, then we can rest assured that our first President was indeed a Christian.

Now, Mr. Pinto focused a great deal on the doctrine of the trinity in regards to my statement about Dr. Wilson, and I agree with Mr. Pinto that this is a very important Christian doctrine. I do not, however, know of any place in Scripture which teaches that belief in this doctrine is necessary for salvation. I recently returned from a trip to Panama City, Panama where we were privileged to see thirty-five people accept Christ as their Savior. As far as I know, not a single one of these individuals professed a belief in the doctrine of the trinity at the time of their profession of faith. Would Mr. Pinto deny that these people are now Christians? Suppose that one of these new believers was from another town, and when he returned there, he joined the only church which he could find and which happened to be a Unitarian church. Does Mr. Pinto think that such a man would lose his salvation if he came to accept the doctrines of Unitarianism? And lest Mr. Pinto answer that no true believer would ever accept such a false doctrine, let me remind him that both Ephesians 4:14 and Hebrews 13:9 speak of believers being deceived by strange doctrines and cunning craftiness of men. It is also obvious from the passage in Ephesians that this did not cause these people to lose their salvation. They remained Christians even while believing falsehoods.

Before moving to the next point, let me reiterate that Mr. Pinto is mistaken in repeatedly insisting that I provided a link to the December 3, 1831, issue of the Evangelical Magazine. I provided links to two different issues of that magazine. The first link was to the December 24, 1831, edition of the magazine which directly identified the author of the sermon from which Mr. Pinto is quoting as Dr. Henry R. Wilson. The second link was to the December 10, 1831, edition which contained the text of Dr. Wilson's sermon as well as an editorial review of that sermon. I can only assume that Mr. Pinto's insistence that I referenced the December 3rd issue is a red herring intended to persuade his listeners of my ignorance.

By the way, it should be noted that Mr. Pinto completely ignored an extremely important fact which I revealed in my fourth point. "One of the portions of the sermon that Mr. Pinto quoted relies on the proceedings of the Constitutional Convention which were said to have been published by Charles Thomson. However, as Mr. Pinto correctly pointed out in an earlier segment of the film, Secretary Thomson never published a book on the proceedings of the Convention."

This brings us to Mr. Pinto's third broadcast in which he addresses points number six and seven from my previous article. One of the most intriguing parts of this broadcast is the amount of mental gymnastics that Mr. Pinto is willing to go through in order to defend Mr. Conway as a trusted historian. I cannot help but wonder how different Mr. Pinto's film might have been if he had approached the writings of the founders with the same attitude of reverence that he grants to those who ridicule them. Just how reasonable is it for Mr. Pinto to insist that Mr. Conway's credentials make him incapable of lying or being in error when there are dozens of men with equal or even better credentials whom Mr. Pinto accuses of doing just that?

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<sup>25</sup> Johnson, William J., *George Washington the Christian*, The Abingdon Press, New York, 1919, pg 26 (<http://archive.org/stream/georgewashington007782mbp#page/n35/mode/2up>)

A less intriguing but nonetheless revealing aspect of this third broadcast is Mr. Pinto's oblivious display of his ignorance of history. One of Mr. Pinto's primary defenses of Mr. Conway's credibility is his claim that Mr. Conway was a direct descendent of George Washington. He even suggested that our first President could have been Mr. Conway's great grandfather. How unfortunate it must be that Mr. Washington never fathered any children. I suppose that I could borrow Mr. Pinto's terminology and state that:

"The idea that [Mr. Conway was a direct descendent of George Washington] is just an unreasonable position for anyone that is calling himself a researcher or a historian. That's an unreasonable position to take. It's irresponsible, and it shows that [he] is really not interested at all in seeking out what the truth is. [He] just wants to gather whatever propaganda [he] think[s] will support [his] argument."

Of course, Mr. Pinto might find my use of such terminology to be offensive, so I'll just leave it in the realm of supposition.

Another interesting comment made by Mr. Pinto in this segment is that of his definition of a historian. He defined a historian as "anybody who's documenting historic events in such great detail as Conway did." It seems as if Mr. Pinto is using Mr. Conway as the standard by which he defines the term of "historian." If Mr. Conway is the standard by which all historians are to be measured, then it goes without saying that he would meet that standard himself. This causes me to wonder if Mr. Pinto's definition of a pseudo-historian is really just anyone who disagrees with Mr. Conway about the history of our nation.

Yet another example of Mr. Pinto's miscomprehension of history can be seen in his recounting of the history of the Treaty of Tripoli. According to Mr. Pinto, "You have an original treaty written in Arabic. It comes from Tripoli to America. It's translated into English by Joel Barlow. The English version of the treaty is being presented there in the Senate." Where did Mr. Pinto come up with this sequence of events? He certainly did not discover this in the historical record. As I have already pointed out, the Treaty of Tripoli was signed by the Pasha of Tripoli on November 4, 1796 and the translation of the treaty into English was completed on November 26, 1796. Had Mr. Barlow concluded his negotiation in November of 1846 instead of 1796, he might have been able to book passage on the *Yorkshire* in order to cross the Atlantic in time to arrive in America prior to translating the treaty,<sup>26</sup> but it is highly unlikely that he was able to find a ship in his day that could make the crossing with such speed. In reality, Mr. Barlow's translation was most likely completed in either Tripoli or Algiers while he was overseeing the payment of the tribute.

Immediately upon the heels of this blunder, Mr. Pinto asks the following question:

"Is it possible that what happened was, the treaty comes to America, they're reviewing it and then George Washington says, 'Wait a minute. I want to add something to this treaty,' and then he writes out Article 11 and then he sends it over to the Senate, and then they work it into the treaty and it becomes - - however it becomes; we don't know -- it becomes Article 11? Is that possible? And is this what Conway means or what he meant when he said that Washington sent this to the Senate? Could that be the answer?"

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.geocities.com/mppraetorius/com-yo.htm>

The answer to this question is an emphatic no. That is not possible, and there are several reasons why. First, the treaty was translated into English by Mr. Barlow before it was sent to America to be considered for ratification, and the translation of Article 11 bears his signature and is in his own handwriting.<sup>27</sup> Second, as I mentioned previously, the treaty was not sent to America until after the note and receipt were added to it in January of 1797 and it received the approval of Col. Humphreys in February of 1797. This means that the treaty would have arrived in America during Mr. Adams' presidency and not during Mr. Washington's presidency. Third, the Senate Executive Journal records that the treaty was submitted to the Senate by Mr. Adams and not by Mr. Washington. And fourth and finally, this supposed series of events is not possible because the Senate does not have the Constitutional authority to work something into a treaty. Mr. Pinto is merely clutching at straws in order to find some means of saving his reputation.

This is followed by still another exorbitant claim. Mr. Pinto states that Mr. Washington could have demanded that the text of Article 11 be worked into the Treaty of Tripoli because he was the most powerful man in the world and to oppose him would have meant political suicide. If this were true, then why didn't Mr. Washington include Article 11 in the Treaty of Algiers? If he were really that powerful, then he certainly could have done so. Mr. Pinto offers no explanation for this, and once again it appears that he is simply making things up as he goes.

Mr. Pinto then suggests that his explanation must be true simply because no one else has ever offered an alternative solution. This is utter nonsense. Nothing can be said to be true just because no one has presented an alternative proposition. Besides which, the alternative is in the historical record itself. The text of Article 11 is in Mr. Barlow's own handwriting and it bears his own signature. It was translated before he had time to either travel to or communicate with anyone in America, and it is just one part of what amounts to a glaringly poor translation of the entire treaty. The alternative explanation then is that the text of Article 11 is just Mr. Barlow's very poor attempt at translating the Arabic across from which it was placed.

This concludes my response to Mr. Pinto's three radio broadcasts. I trust that it has been made obvious that Mr. Pinto has relied on a series of ad-hominem attacks and mischaracterizations to portray me as being ignorant of this topic while at the same time displaying multiple flaws in his understanding of the law and the sequence of events related to the Treaty of Tripoli. When I presented documentation of his error, he did not respond with evidence to the contrary but rather with a remarkable show of misdirection and incredulity in an attempt prevent his followers from recognizing his mistakes. His attempted defense was so poorly researched, that I half expected him to resort to the shallow vocals and mysterious music which he utilizes so effectively in his films. That would have at least made his feeble endeavors at argumentation more entertaining. At the end of the day, Mr. Pinto's claims are revealed as nothing more than a collection of smoke and mirrors desperately employed to distract his listeners from the truth of his plight.

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<sup>27</sup> [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/bar1796n.asp#n1](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/bar1796n.asp#n1)